

Post-80's Cultivation Journal - Chapter 01-06

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 1 : Peasant Name Is Easy To Raise

Zhang Jiaohua, was born in 1985 of the Lunar Calendar, 14th of July. 15th July of the Lunar Calendar was Zhong Yuanjie. Zhong Yuanjie was commonly referred to as the Ghost Festival. In rural areas, every year people offer sacrifices to their ancestors before this day. Zhang Jiaohua's parents were also farmers. In the family, he was the eldest and was also the youngest. Since the first child of the father and mother was a boy, according to the family planning policy, they could only have one child. On the Meizi'ao reservoir dam, there was a coarsely written line in chalk: The son ran to find Father, Father ran to tear down the house.

The reason that Zhang Jiaohua was called Zhang Jiaohua was because, Zhang Jiaohua's grandparents believed that choosing a cheap name would make him easier to raise.^[1] Jiaohua, or rather "JiaoHua Zi (Beggar)", was originally only a childhood nickname. Who would have known that at the time of the 90s census, Zhang Jiaohua's parents were not at home, and the village branch secretary, Zhang Dechun, chose that day and Zhang Jiaohua's childhood name straightforwardly became his formal name. The people of the village were not so pretentious towards names. The name that was entered into the household register also didn't have the inclination to go and have the name changed. Zhang Jiaohua became Zhang Jiaohua's formal name.

Originally, Zhang Jiaohua's childhood was not any different compared to an ordinary village brat. He ate the same food and had the same diet. He would play around and acted like a spoiled child towards his parents, and towards his Grandpa and Grandma, he would behave like a despot. He would get into fights and scuffles with the other village brats and steal one mao from his parents to go and buy a popsicle. He would pick grapes to eat from the grapevine in Zhang Jiujin's house, and go to the mountains to fish out birds nests... Just the same, just the same, there was nothing unusual in any way. However, Zhang Jiaohua, at the age of six years, experienced an unusual event that completely changed

his life path.

Children from poor families were able to handle households early, and Meizi'ao children learned from an early age to help their parents with household chores and farm work. Zhang Jiaohua was no exception. When he was five years old, he was responsible for preparing the food in the house, sweeping the floor, pulling hogweed, gathering firewood, and cow herding. It was not that Zhang Jiaohua became sensible early, but rather in Meizi'ao village, as long as a child was not an imbecile and not foolish, then by this time, they would have to work.

Taking the cattle for grazing up the mountain at first light, letting them graze for one-two hours, then returning home for breakfast. Then setting out at around 4-5 PM in the afternoon, and only coming back when it was dark. Oxen were the most precious draft animals in the rural areas. At that time, one family couldn't raise an ox. Several households collectively raised one ox. An ox would have had to tend to about ten-twenty mu large field. If you needed the ox to work, then usually you must let it eat its fill.

Certainly, as far as Meizi'ao brats were concerned, the ox herding time was perhaps their lifetime's most beautiful period. Because during ox herding, as long as the oxen were rushed up the mountain, the brats could play around absolutely unrestrained. Of course, if the ox accidentally ran down the mountain and ate up other people's seedlings in a large area, then they would not be able to escape the grasp of other people. Definitely, they would be pursued by that house, demanding compensation. Within the time of a meal, there would unavoidably be a fight. However, the moment the scar healed, the pain was forgotten. The next day, vigorous and lively and full of fresh blood, the brats would continue doing things in their own ways.

Summer time, it was the most enjoyable time for baby ox herders. Although while going out, the parents would warn them repeatedly, in all kinds of ways, to not – in any circumstances – bathe in the pond. However, in the mountains, the brats became Sun Wukong and were capable of overturning the heavens.

Frequently, Zhang Jiaohua would go ox herding along with a group of brats having the same surname and form a large family. Although they were all contemporaries, but they were not at the same seniority. In Meizi'ao, the brats would often call the adults uncle.

Gouwa, amongst the six people, ranked the highest in seniority. The other few people would call him 18th Uncle. Jinhu, Fugui, Xiaoshuan, Mancang, contrary to what one might expect, were all peers of Zhang Jiaohua.^[2]

Jinhu was the eldest and was two years older than Zhang Jiaohua. At the time of the accident, he was eight years old and in first grade. Mancang was the youngest and was one year younger than Zhang Jiaohua. Fugui was one year older than Zhang Jiaohua. Xiaoshuan and Gouwa were similarly older than Zhang Jiaohua.

On that day of the mishap, Jinhu was enjoying the summer vacation, not even a few days after Zhang Jiaohua's birthday, on the fifteenth day of July as per the Lunar Calendar,.

During that time, without any reason, Zhang Jiaohua became especially sleep every day, yawning while walking everywhere.

On that afternoon of the day of the mishap, going to the mountain, Zhang Jiaohua was no longer able to keep his eyelids lifted. He looked for a tree shade and lay down to sleep on the grass.

He also didn't know how long he slept, but Zhang Jinhu ran over at once and kept pushing Zhang Jiaohua.

"Jiaohua, Jiaohua, get up quickly! Jiaohua, Jiaohua, get up quickly!"

Zhang Jiaohua barely opened his eyes, moved his body a bit, then went to sleep again.

Zhang Fugui also came running over, and forcefully pushed Zhang Jiaohua.

"Jiaohua, Jiaohua, get up quickly, come take a dip with us."

This time, Zhang Jiaohua responded in agreement, "Ok." But his body moved a bit, and again laid down to sleep.

The remaining five children all came running over, calling out incessantly.

"Jiaohua, get up!"

"Jiaohua, come with us quickly to catch fish in the pond."

"Jiaohua, quickly come."

.....

Zhang Jiaohua, from the beginning, couldn't keep his eyes open. He also didn't know why he was feeling so sleepy. He was able to hear the voices of his several little friends quite clearly and he could even feel their movements, but, he was utterly incapable of opening his eyes no matter what.

Zhang Jiaohua was finally awakened by his father, Zhang Youping.

Zhang Youping had come, and raising Zhang Jiaohua onto his thigh, he began spanking his butt heavily making "pipa pipa" sounds.

Zhang Jiaohua was aching enough to die, and this enabled him to come to his senses. Seeing Zhang Youping, he knew that he was in trouble. He thought that his water buffaloes had gone grazing on other people's grain.

"Father, ah. I later wouldn't dare go to sleep while cattle herding. Mother, ah. Come quickly and save me, ah. I really couldn't help but go to sleep." Zhang Jiaohua began crying loudly. He still didn't know what exactly had happened after all.

Zhang Jiaohua's mother, Liu Qiaoye, came forward to protect her son just like a mother hen, displaying her astonishing valiance, "My child hasn't done anything wrong, why are you beating him?"

"They all came out for cattle herding together, Jinhu and the rest are dead. How can I possibly face their parents? What could I possibly tell them?" Zhang Youping said painfully.

"This is an accident. It's not Jiaohua's mistake." Liu Qiaoye said with a much gloomier voice.

"Mother, ah. What happened to Jinhu and them?" Zhang Jiaohua asked in a perplexed manner. He only remembered that those five kept shouting about going to take a bath, but he wasn't able to open his eyes. If he wasn't so sleepy, he would also have gone to the pond to loaf around.

"Jinhu and all drowned to death. It got dark, but you all didn't return home. After work, we all came out to search and discovered the cattle in the fish pond. Their clothes were placed ashore. We groped around for a long time, except, by the time we pulled them out, they were all stiff. Seeing the absence of your

clothes, we knew that we would be able to find you here!” Liu Qiaoye, speaking up to this point, also couldn’t help but wail.

“Jinhu and them are not dead! They are all here. Jinhu, you all, why aren’t you speaking!” This sentence of Zhang Jiaohua made a cold sweat run down the backs of the Zhang Youping husband and wife couple.

[\[1\]](#) Ok, this made me spend quite some time, but it worth it for the lulz. Let’s break down 张叫花 or Zhang Jiao Hua. Zhang means a sheet of paper or flat object, Jiao Hua or 叫花 is (imo) shortening of the term 叫花子 which means Beggar. Also 叫(Jiao) means shouting, and 花(Hua) means spending money. So, you can see how cheap the name of MC really is

[\[2\]](#) Jinhu = Gold Tiger, Fugui = Riches and Honor, XiaoShuan = Little Cork, Mancang = Full Warehouse

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Chapter 2

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Chapter 2 – Child Trafficker

“Later, you are not allowed to say that you can see Jinhu and all, understand?” After returning home, Liu Qiaoye promptly warned Zhang Jiaohua.

Zhang Jiaohua looked at the five silent young companions that had been following by his side. He didn’t understand why his mother would tell him to lie. When Kindergarten Teacher said that good child shouldn’t lie?

If there was a choice between listening to Mother’s words or the Teacher’s words, the majority would choose the latter. The teachers were the role models. Therefore, Zhang Jiaohua didn’t answer.

“Do you understand what mother told you?” How could Liu Qiaoye be aware of the psychology of her child.

“En.” Zhang Jiaohua was very unwilling.

Although such a big matter happened, the life in Meizi’ao would continue. For several days, laughter couldn’t be heard at Meizi’ao. There appeared to be an unusual silence inside the village.

However, life must continue, the fields also cannot be left abandoned. The five children left the memory of Meizi’ao, only several freshly dug up unmarked graves remained. Jinhu and all who had died so young couldn’t be admitted into the Ancestral grave, even couldn’t be made into mass grave. They were set aside from the memory of Meizi’ao perhaps just like their tombs, slowly submerged by weeds.

For a long time after the mishap, Zhang Jiaohua’s parents didn’t permit him to go out.

Zhang Jiaohua was forced to sit on the main gate’s threshold looking at the blue sky and the white clouds floating, and the five young companions sitting at his side.

“Jinhu, why don’t you talk to me? It doesn’t feel good being alone at home.” Zhang Jiaohua said looking at Jinhu sitting.

If anyone was here, they would definitely notice that Zhang Jiaohua was talking to the air.

Jinhu, Fugui, Xiaoshuan, Gouwa, Mancang, were all naked with the appearance of just having taken a dip in the pond. A village child being naked wasn’t much of an issue, Zhang Jiaohua also didn’t find anything wrong. Originally, Mother had told him, that Jinhu and all had died, people after death would become ghosts. What he was seeing were ghosts. Zhang Jiaohua feared ghosts very much since childhood, but he also didn’t know why but when he saw these five little friends, he actually felt that these little friends were still living.

Zhang Youping carrying a heavy load of beans on his shoulderpole, laid it down in the courtyard, while using the towel wrapped on the pole to wipe his sweat. Then he took down his bamboo hat, intending to enter the house to drink water.

“Son, who were you talking to just now?” Zhang Youping while entering the courtyard just a moment ago, seemed to have heard his son talking, and a bad feeling arose in his heart.

“Jinhu. Fugui, they all are here.” Zhang Jiaohua said pointing at the threshold.

The Jinhu, et al’s group of five just blankly stared at Zhang Jiaohua.

Zhang Jiaohua could apparently feel an ill wind blowing at his face, his heart became sad, knowing that his son had become entangled in some dirty things. He was anxious in his heart, but he didn’t have any least bit of a solution.

At night time, Zhang Jiaohua’s Grandpa and Grandma came over, Uncle and Aunt also followed behind. Grandpa and Grandma lived with Zhang Jiaohua’s Uncle. Living in an old house. Zhang Jiaohua’s house was constructed last year, and at that time they had moved out of the old house.

“Jiaohua is apparently being tormented by the little ghosts of those five. This period, Jiaohua has been talking everyday with those five little ghosts.” Zhang Youping heavy heartedly, continued puffing on his tobacco pipe.

“Youping, just go call Daoist Priest Ma to come and see.” Jiaohua’s Grandpa offered a suggestion. Daoist Priest Ma was called Ma Wulang. He was a Meishan

Sect Shuishi. Usually liked wearing Daoist robes, so the villagers called him Daoist Priest Ma. Usually, when the cemetery needs to be looked at, or the foundation need to be looked at, or whenever, superstition arises then also he is asked to come. He also simultaneously acts as a doctor. Some sicknesses which the barefoot doctors in the villages are unable to treat, then also he is sought for.

[TLNote: Literal translation of Shuishi or 水师 means Water Master. Basically, Shuishi here is an honorific/title bestowed upon a special category of people found in Hunan, Jiangxi and Guangxi parts of China who use Talismans and a Cup of fresh water to set bones and cure people's illnesses]

“Father, this isn't good, right? If this Daoist Priest Ma comes then the entire Meizi'ao will come to know of the matter. Later, my son will be looked upon like a monster.” Zhang Youping was extremely worried.

Liu Qiaoye was also unwilling, “Exactly, even though my child can see them, they are not harming my child. Actually, even this way is also all right.”

Zhang Jiaohua's Grandpa's will not being carried out, made him very annoyed, “Your son, you yourself decide. Just that when the time comes and something happens, don't regret later that it is too late.”

Zhang Youping husband and wife thought it over, but still didn't want to call Ma Wulang.

However, paper can't wrap fire, there is no wall on earth from which no wind passes through. Although Zhang Youping's entire family meticulously tried to conceal this matter, nevertheless the news that Zhang Jiaohua was being entangled with ghosts spread. The village children were all warned by their parents, must not in any circumstance be close to Zhang Jiaohua. Moreover, Ma Wulang turned up uninvited.

Zhang Jiaohua had celebrated his birthday not too long ago. Ma Wulang came to Zhang Jiaohua's home leaning on a stick wrapped in lots of multicoloured cloths. That stick had the appearance similar to the sticks on which tanghulu are sold in the cities. [TLNote: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanghulu>]

Zhang Jiaohua had shifted a four-legged stool to sit under the eaves, and was watching with keen interest, ants entering a small hole and moving out about.

Jinhu, Fugui, Xiaoshuan, Gouwa, Mancang all had formed a circle, and were also watching with keen interest.

At this time, Ma Wulang forcefully stuck in his stick into the Zhang Jiaohua's house's veranda. The veranda wasn't cemented, only using hammered wooden spikes fixed with clay bricks. Ma Wulang directly used the stick in his hand and inserted it into a clay brick. The cloth strips on top kept swaying incessantly. There was a little bell on the staff, once the staff was planted, the little bell began jingling "dingdong".

Zhang Jiaohua jumped in fright, he thought that a child trafficker had come. Jinhu, et. al. promptly hid behind Zhang Jiaohua.

"Who are you looking for? My parents are not at home." Zhang Jiaohua still stood up with great courage.

"The one I am looking for is you, your parents not being at home is by chance." Ma Wulang again forcefully slammed down the staff he was holding into the ground.

Zhang Jiaohua began trembling out of fright, shakingly said: "Even if you kidnap me, you won't be able to sell me off, I remember the names of my parents, also remember the name of my hometown. If you sell me off, I will run away home."

"No problem. I won't kidnap you for selling, just make you go beg for me, ok. If you won't listen to me, I will just break your legs, leaving you unable to escape. If you want to shout for help, I will feed you mute pill, turning you into a mute." Ma Wulang laughed cruelly, deliberately making up stories to frighten Zhang Jiaohua.

How could a child endure this kind of an assault? Zhang Jiaohua immediately began crying after being frightened by Ma Wulang. Jinhu and all also began crying loudly out of fright.

"Don't cry!" Ma Wulang again looked at the staff in his hands and forcefully stamped it down. The little bell made jingling sounds.

Zhang Jiaohua was still crying, but he unexpectedly didn't dare cry out loudly.

"My parents will come back soon, you this child trafficker won't be able to

escape!” Zhang Jiaohua while wiping his tears, thought of an idea.

“Just a moment ago while coming, I saw your parents pulling up grass and spreading fertilizer in the field. They won’t return all of a sudden. The villagers all know that you have become possessed by little ghosts, and no will come to your house.” Ma Wulang thoroughly broke down Zhang Jiaohua’s ideas.

Zhang Jiaohua wanted to cry, but he was afraid of provoking this person in front of him.

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Chapter 3

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Chapter 3 -Kill the Child Trafficker

Even though under Ma Wulang's deterrence, Zhang Jiaohua didn't dare to let out a cry, however two lines of tears just like open taps, flowed down without stopping.

Ma Wulang also upon seeing the brat cry out in such disorderly fashion, no longer thought it to be amusing, "I am not a child trafficker, rather I am Ma family's Daoist Priest Ma. Do you know me?"

Daoist Priest Ma? Isn't that even more terrifying than a child trafficker? No sooner had Ma Wulang spoken out this sentence, Zhang Jiaohua began crying even more grievously. It was not that Ma Wulang was a devilish or monstrous person, rather this was the result of preschool education. Usually, when a child is not being obedient, Grandpa and Grandma, Father or Mother would say: Daoist Priest Ma will come, if you still keep crying, then Daoist Priest Ma will take you away and make you a little ghost. Therefore, in the mind of a child, in the ranking of the most fearful person, the child trafficker is on the number two spot, while Daoist Priest Ma is on the number one spot.

Daoist Priest Ma didn't expect this kind of a result, and immediately became as uncomfortable as if he had swallowed a housefly. Motherfucker, I don't harass any women or young ladies, I don't even steal chicken or steal dogs, just tease those who look unfavourably on me, with some minor dao technique? How did my image become like this?

Jinhu et al were all trembling and shivering, rigidly hiding behind Zhang Jiaohua, but nevertheless didn't run away.

"Don't cry!" Daoist Priest Ma immediately got angry. Three sentences in praise are not as good as a nice beating, your Grandpa, I cannot control you brat.

Zhang Jiaohua was trembling in fright. Jinhu, et al were also shivering from head to toe, while making crying noises. This was the first time that they had

made any sound. Zhang Jiaohua had been terribly frightened by Daoist Priest Ma, and unexpectedly didn't even note this point.

"What is your name?" Daoist Priest Ma was very pleased with this result.

"Zhang, Zhang Jiaohua." Zhang Jiaohua somewhat dreadingly looked at Daoist Priest Ma. This was someone who was even more terrifying than a child trafficker, his body was dirty, looked just like a beggar, disheveled hair and crude face, wearing a Daoist robe with dance program like effect having silk thread below. Daoist Priest Ma was barefooted, both of his feet were very big. Had a feeling that this image of Daoist Priest Ma and the one described by Mother earlier were too different.

"Your mother really has standards!" Daoist Priest Ma laughed, obviously this name Zhang Jiaohua had cheered him up.

"It was not set by my Mother, it was chosen by my Grandpa." Zhang Jiaohua thought that the credit for this should be given to Grandpa. Actually, Zhang Jiaohua was quite pleased with his name, because his name had the character 花 (Hua-Flower) in it. And flowers are really beautiful. The line of thought of brats cannot be the same as that of adults.

"Ok." Daoist Priest Ma thought that it is better not to quibble with these brats, otherwise would possibly be brought down into a ditch, "I heard you were being possessed by little ghosts? Where are they hiding?"

"Don't tell him!" Jinhu anxiously whispered to Zhang Jiaohua. He was afraid of Daoist Priest Ma.

"They....." Zhang Jiaohua was feeling very strange, Doesn't Daoist Priest Ma grab ghosts? How come just like Father and Mother, he cannot see Jinhu and all?

Jinhu and all were very anxious, suddenly they came out from behind Zhang Jiaohua's back, and imploringly said: "Don't tell him! We truly beseech you. We all will die."

"Tell quickly! Otherwise I will kidnap you and sell you off." Daoist Priest Ma threatened somewhat impatiently.

Zhang Jiaohua pointed behind Daoist Priest Ma, while also intently staring at a

pillar behind Daoist Priest Ma.

Daoist Priest Ma sensed a chill run down his back, as if a current of bone chilling ill wind was blowing from his back, feeling as if he had fallen into a ice hole. Daoist Priest Ma's little bit of daoist technique wasn't fake, but his cultivation ability was just at the level of deceiving the fellow villagers. Hadn't opened Heaven's Eye, also didn't have innate Yin-Yang Eye, how could he see the presence of Jinhu and all?

Daoist Priest Ma promptly turned his body to look. Naturally, he couldn't see anything. However, Daoist Priest Ma couldn't let others know that he couldn't see ghosts, even if it is a brat.

Although Zhang Jiaohua was only seven years old, he was still quite intelligent. While Daoist Priest Ma turned around, he immediately ran out of the gate. In the grain drying field, beans and corncob (Maize) were being dried, Zhang Jiaohua grabbed a maize corncob and threw it at Daoist Priest Ma.

“Die you Child Trafficker! Damned Swindler!”

The five little ghosts also became unexpectedly fearless, and were throwing maize corncobs at Daoist Priest Ma along with Zhang Jiaohua.

A maize could be almost three-four tael heavy. The brats in the rural areas every day throw stones on the mountains. The hand strength of a seven year old brat must not be underestimated. Add to that those five little ghosts. On that day the flying maize corncobs seemed like a hailstorm. The strength of the five ghosts was unexpectedly even greater than Zhang Jiaohua. Upon being hit by Zhang Jiaohua, he could only cover one's head and run.

Ma Wulang's cultivation wasn't high, but he wasn't an idiot. Naturally could make out, that attacking him incessantly was not just that one brat. Several little ghosts were also participating.

Daoist Priest Ma had a wee bit of cultivation ability, if he were permitted sufficient time to prepare, he could draw several talismans, also could bring out magical item passed down by Founder, then perhaps dealing with these five little ghosts wouldn't be that big of a problem.

Added to that, today he was intending to gorge till satisfaction at Zhang

Jiaohua's house, therefore by this time his belly was completely empty. Chasing after several little ghosts across the entire courtyard, the remaining grains in his stomach had already been consumed cleanly. Now his empty stomach was making gurgling sounds.

Zhang Jiaohua was fortunate. Those five little ghosts, the more they hit the more experienced they became. Moreover, they had great strength. Zhang Jiaohua who had been just like was throwing maize cobs since the beginning, now directly threw behind a shoulder pole him at Daoist Priest Ma chasing behind him. It seemed as if that the flying shoulderpole was going to hit Daoist Priest Ma. Daoist Priest Ma was planning to raise the staff in his hands to guard himself, but his hands were instead struck by the shoulder pole. The staff directly fell down onto the ground, the bells on top of it made jingling sounds on the ground. If Daoist Priest Ma could use Dao Technique to control this bell, then within one round he would have been able to control these little ghosts. However, Daoist Priest Ma's cultivation ability wasn't refined, he absolutely couldn't control the little bell strung atop the staff. A legacy magic item of the Founder, had unexpectedly been turned into an ornament.

Daoist Priest Ma threw down the staff, and again thought of taking out something. What Daoist Priest Ma was wearing was a Daoist Robe, and the thing was placed in the sleeves. Usually he would have been able to pull it out smoothly, but in this time of crisis, he couldn't pull it out. Reckless application of force resulted in the sleeve getting torn off, and the the things inside fell out. It seemed to be a book, and a compass. The compass dropped down onto the ground with a clanking sound, and rolled a few times on the ground before stopping.

Shortly thereafter, Daoist Priest Ma was struck again by the shoulderpole. Then looked up again to saw that a firewood chopper, a double-edged axe was flying out from Zhang Jiaohua's house. Daoist Priest Ma was frightened, his soul had almost departed. Where would he have the time to take care of the treasure dropped down on the ground? He broke into a run to get out.

Although, Jinhu and the others of five little ghosts saw Daoist Priest Ma escaping, but they actually didn't pursue him out from the courtyard.

One person and Five little ghosts had just now erupted with all their energy. At

this time, the powerful enemy had ran, so they sat down on the threshold gasping for breath.

“What bad luck!” Gasping for breath, Zhang Jiaohua was looking at the corncobs on the ground, he immediately scowled miserably. He immediately ran to pick up the corncobs everywhere.

“Jiaohua, we will help you pick up!” Jinhu and other little young comrades stepped up.

In the courtyard, a strange phenomenon was appearing, the corncobs spread across the entire courtyard were flying, automatically flying onto the bamboo mat in the grain drying field.

Daoist Priest Ma gasping for breath had run out for quite a distance, and was seen by the villagers.

“Daoist Priest Ma, how did you end up like this?” Liu Qiangwang, tractor operator in Meizi’ao was also a known character in Meizi’ao. He mockingly looked at the battered and bruised Daoist Priest Ma.

“Bad luck, through and through! Zhang Youping’s house has several little ghosts which have turned into malicious spirits. Today if it were not for me running quickly, I would have nearly died in that house.” Daoist Priest Ma still had some lingering fears.

Chapter 4

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Chapter 4 – Battle Spoils

The more the people, the greater the strength, eh, perhaps better to say, the more the ghosts the greater the strength. Zhang Jiaohua and Jinhu, et al, had very quickly tidied up the corncobs fallen everywhere on the ground. It seemed as if nothing had ever happened here. Only on the ground, several kind of objects were left behind. The most obvious was naturally Ma Wulang's dharma staff. That jingling little bell on top of it attracted Zhang Jiaohua very much. Aside from it, there was a book which seemed like it had been taken out from a salted pickle jar. Zhang Jiaohua opened it to have a look. In preschool he had learned several characters which seemed, to in no way enable him to read this book. Unexpectedly there were several diagrams inside.

Zhang Jiaohua looking at these diagrams seemed to understand, yet not understand. By comparison that compass was quite high-class, at a glance it seemed like a high-end object.

These good things naturally needed to be hidden. Zhang Jiaohua searched the entire house looking for places to stow away. That book was quite easy to hide, just lifted the mat, and squeezed it into the dry straw bedding. After setting it nicely, he looked cautiously to see if it could be seen. The Compass was not small, but it was comparatively easy to hide. In Meizi'ao, for a child at that age, who wouldn't have several places to stow away treasures? Only that magic staff's size was too big, it was not easy to hide, if by any chance it were discovered, Zhang Jiaohua reckoned that his own buttocks would blossom like flower. [TLNote: Friendly reminder the 'Hua' in his name means Flower]

This magic staff was no doubt domineering. Zhang Jiaohua didn't dare to take it out and show off in front of other children. Moreover, even if Zhang Jiaohua dared to show off, the village brats wouldn't give Zhang Jiaohua this chance. What Zhang Jiaohua most interested about was the little bell atop the magic staff. The magic staff was wrapped in brightly coloured rags, and upon lifting it

open, a little bell could be seen tied with hemp rope to the dharma staff. The knot was tied really tight. Zhang Jiaohua didn't have any other option but to go to his mother's room, and bring out a pair of scissors which she used to make shoes. The scissors cut through the hemp rope, and the bell fell down onto the ground directly. However, Zhang Jiaohua was not careful and his finger was cut by the iron wire being used to fasten the rags cloth wrapped around the dharma staff. Bright red blood immediately began gushing out of his fingertips.

Getting injured, and drawing out blood, for the brats of Meizi'ao was a common occurrence. In Zhang Jiaohua's eyes there was only the little bell, where would he have the time to pay attention to a little wound. He was disinclined to go wash the blood, and just directly grabbed the little bell on the ground.

At this time, the little bell in the hand became stuck to Zhang Jiaohua's hand just like all-purpose glue. Moreover, it also seemed as if it was sucking blood. Zhang Jiaohua could feel unbearable pain being transmitted from his fingers. That originally silver-white coloured bell slowly transformed into scarlet red.

There was a small ring on the little bell having five small bells, on which fine and bizarre decorative patterns were being carved. It seemed as if the blood was flowing in the pattern atop the bell. The blood flowing out of Zhang Jiaohua's finger was unexpectedly flowing in the pattern of the little bell. Very quickly scarlet red blood capillaries completely enveloped the little bell.

Zhang Jiaohua was very afraid, he wanted to throw out the little bell, but actually the little bell appeared as if it was stuck, and he couldn't throw it out.

"Mother, ah, I am going to die!" Zhang Jiaohua let out a miserable cry in his heart, but no matter how much he shouted no sound came out.

The five brats also became extremely anxious, but they absolutely couldn't get near Zhang Jiaohua's body. So long as they would get even a little bit close, the little bell would let out a humming sound. That hum was extremely subtle, and if one didn't listen carefully he would be unable to hear. However, to the ears of Jinhu et al., it seemed like a mighty gong, immediately making them confused and disoriented.

After a while, the little bell as if satisfied, finally stopped. Suddenly just like a one KW bulb lighting up, there was a sudden flash, and white sparkling light

enveloped Zhang Jiaohua within the white radiance. Zhang Jiaohua sat down on the ground, and began gasping for deep breath. Without thinking, he threw away the little bell in his hand. Who could have imagined that soon after the bell flew out, it would turn in mid-air and return back into Zhang Jiaohua's hands.

Jinhu et al., didn't dare get close to Zhang Jiaohua's body, and could only stretch their necks from afar to ascertain Zhang Jiaohua's condition. Just a moment ago when Zhang Jiaohua had threw out the bell, the little bell had made ding-dong sounds while in the air. This sound as far as Jinhu and all were concerned, was just like a shock wave, as it struck them fiercely while they flew out.

Jinhu et al., didn't have any material existence, usually even if they were to be thrown down onto the ground, they wouldn't feel a thing. However this time, after being impacted by the shockwave, their whole body felt pain, especially an unbearable headache.

"Jiaohua, Jiaohua. Don't throw it. We are afraid of the sound that this little bell makes." Mancang repeatedly shouted.

Zhang Jiaohua gawked for a moment, then flicked his hand, and the dinglong sound came again.

Jinhu et al., rolled down on the ground holding their heads in pain.

Zhang Jiaohua seeing the pitiful appearance of Jinhu et al., knew that it was impossible for them to be deceiving him. He quickly went into the room to find an old handkerchief and wrapped it around the bell so that it won't be able to make any sound.

"Jiaohua!" Zhang Youping shouted loudly in the courtyard.

Zhang Jiaohua's entire body trembled in fright, he promptly threw out the staff in his hands out through the backdoor. Then very quickly rushed to the courtyard.

"Brat, where had you run off to?" Zhang Youping although appeared to be speaking in a scolding tone, but he actually cared for him in the utmost.

Zhang Jiaohua faked a yawn, "Just now I had accidentally fell asleep."

“Look, I brought you something nice to eat?” Zhang Youping took out two Huanghua Pears from a bamboo wicker basket, and holding in his hand called out to Zhang Jiaohua.

[TLNote: Huanghua Pears are a type of Common pear

<http://www.baike.com/wiki/%E9%BB%84%E8%8A%B1%E6%A2%A8%5B%E6%B0>

“Ah! Pears.” Zhang Jiaohua immediately rushed forward, and took the two pears into his hands.

Jinhu et al., seeing the pears in Zhang Jiaohua’s hands, couldn’t help but swallow a gulp. However, by this time, they already knew that for them the food aside from being an allure of the past, didn’t have the slightest bit of any other use. They could smell the fragrance of the fruit, they were also able to touch it, but they had no way of putting the pear into their belly. Certainly, they could snatch those two pears and smash them onto Zhang Jiaohua’s head. Only Zhang Jiaohua had put away the little bell in a bag, and they didn’t dare to provoke him.

The fruits in the rural areas aren’t sprayed with insecticides, brats usually eat fruits without ever washing, directly wiping them with clothes, and immediately taking a big bite. Huanghua Pear’s skin was relatively thick, but Zhang Jiaohua didn’t pay any mind. The Huanghua Pear was already ripe, and the rich fruit pulp was sweet as syrup, flowing down the food pipe, it could bring incomparable delight.

“Eat slowly. They all are for you only. Don’t choke.” Zhang Youping let out a smile upon seeing his darling son eating with relish. At this time, he had already forgotten about all the kinds of abnormalities of Zhang Jiaohua. In the eyes of parents, a child or daughter didn’t have any abnormalities, only insufficient love for treasured babies.

“Dad, today a child smuggler came. He wanted to kidnap me. Also described himself as Ma Wulang. Later, it was driven by us.” Zhang Jiaohua mouth was chock full of pear pulp, and his words were somewhat unclear.

“What? You all? Speak quickly, and clearly to Father.” Zhang Youping’s eyes opened wide in fright.

“You don’t know, that fellow didn’t put even the least bit of a fight.” Zhang Jiaohua swallowed down the pear, his belly had already become full. He was

reluctant to eat the remaining at this time, so he stowed away the remaining in hiding in home. Brats had an inherent ability to hide things. After having finished with all this, he then clearly told Father about what had occurred earlier.

Zhang Youping's was frowning deeply. Actually he had already heard while coming, that the person who came was definitely Daoist Priest Ma Wulang. What made Zhang Youping feel surprised was the unexpected ferocity of the Jinhu *et al*. Although so far hasn't hurt his precious child, but later who knows whether they will turn out to be a calamity or good fortune?

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 5 – Daoist Priest Ma seeks the magic item

Ma Wulang had wanted to go to Zhang Jiaohua's house to make money, but he didn't expect that he himself would end up suffering at the hands of and lose to that beggar fellow. He touched his sleeves, those bad luck ghosts, even the sutra passed down by the Founder was lost. That magic item was also lost, but since it was just used to pay respects to his dead Founder who had passed down the bell so he also didn't pay attention. This sutra nevertheless was actually an important object, although amongst the daoist magic inside the sutra, he had mastered not even one or two out of the ten.

However, this thing was used as a proof of his identity. As for that compass, it was also not anything important. He had found it in the house of an Old landlord, and hid it in the ground. Later, when the matter had settled down, he had appropriated it for himself.

Ma Wulang wasn't the least bit assured in dealing with them. Especially recalling that last axe that flew towards him, a chill ran down his spine. His little life had all but ended, ah. However, he would still have to ask that Beggar fellow. Not only did he lose to that Beggar fellow, he even lost that sutra. Deceased Founder had earlier said, that losing the sutra is tantamount to losing dao ability. Every time Ma Wulang drew a talisman, each stroke would be made by copying from the sutra. Now after losing the sutra, he was left completely blind.

The events of just now had emphasized that scary appearance of Zhang Jiaohua, and now wanting to go there and take back a thing from that beggar fellow, would probably not be easy. Ma Wulang after much deliberation, decided to act against Zhang Jiaohua's family. Therefore, he didn't go straight to Zhang Jiaohua's house, rather he went to Zhang Jiaohua's old house.

Zhang Jiaohua's Grandparents lived in the old house. The Elderly feared the gods and spirits, and naturally would fear these "dressing up as god, playing

the devil” people like Ma Wulang. Seeing Ma Wulang come to their house, they were indeed very respectful. [TLNote: “Dressing up as God, Playing the Devil”: Basically an idiom for fear-mongering scammers]

“Daoist Priest Ma, you don’t visit often, ah. Please sit down quickly, please sit down quickly. Old woman, still haven’t hurriedly gone to catch a chicken to butcher yet?” Zhang Jiaohua’s Grandfather was very enthusiastic.

“No need, no need. We are fellow villagers sharing the same hometown, eating a simple home-made dish can be done whenever convenient. Uncle Manyin, Me coming to your house, you should know the reason right?” Ma Wulang pretended to be mysterious. Zhang Jiaohua’s Grandfather was named Zhang Manyin.

“Could it be you are.....?” Zhang Manyin reacted all of a sudden.

“Correct. When I walked past the gate of your family’s second son’s home, I felt a very heavy negative qi coming from his home. I also heard about your Grandson’s matter. We all are fellow villagers, and I am the one to fulfill this role. When ghosts and evil spirits begin making mischief, I have no option but to deal with them.” Ma Wulang said with a strong air of righteousness. If it were not for the magic staff being lost in Zhang Jiaohua’s home, at this time the magic staff would have been heavily pounded onto the clay flooring, and the effect would have been even greater. Ma Wulang was feeling somewhat regretful in his heart.

Zhang Manyin was moved beyond words, “Daoist Priest Ma, you really are a good person, ah!”

Sweat emerged on Daoist Priest Ma’s forehead. In Meizi’ao there were many people who were afraid of him, but those who said he was a good person were very few.

An old hen of Zhang Manyin’s house was nevertheless slaughtered. Usually, when a chicken is slaughtered, one bowl is delivered to the house of both their two children. Also, every delicious thing was sent over by the two grandparents. The both of them had plenty of opportunities to drink soup. This time due to Daoist Priest Ma coming, Zhang Manyin’s woman and Zhang Jiaohua’s Grandma Ma Donghua didn’t separate the soup into two portions.

Daoist Priest Ma's belly was already making gurgling sounds out of starvation. Smelling the fragrance of chicken, he couldn't help but drool.

"Uncle Yinshu, you really are too attentive."

The table manners of Daoist Priest Ma didn't have the makings of a person of high skill. In front of the fragrant chicken meat, all the temperament of an expert were kept to one side. Eating to one's full, and drinking to one's limit was the top priority.

"Daoist Priest Ma, how should the matter of second child's family be solved?" Zhang Manyin himself wasn't too willing to partake in the big bowl of full of chicken meat. For fear that this honoured guest wouldn't be able to eat to his satisfaction.

"This depends on your family's second child's own decision." Daoist Priest Ma spoke slowly with a stuffed mouth, in vague terms.

"The key is this son of mine, right this is not Taishang's concern. I had already told him to invite Daoist Priest Ma. He has all along been evading it." Zhang Manyin frowned tightly, while his eyes stared at Daoist Priest Ma, hoping that Daoist Priest would have some great idea. Perhaps this Daoist Priest Ma after eating and drinking to his full, would directly go to second child's house, and grab those several little ghosts. [TLNote: Taishang is a title of respect for Daoists; Like His Holiness or His Eminence]

Daoist Priest Ma had earlier himself thrown his helmet and abandoned his armor, how could he have any good ideas. He wanted to reach an understanding with those little ghosts to forgive and forget. He was content with getting back at that beggar fellow. He didn't think that he had the ability to deal with those few little ghosts.[TLNote: Throwing Helmet, and Abandoning Armor: Quite self explanatory idiom for running away in retreat mode]

"This matter is not simple. Today when I had passed by from there, I had just intended to scout things out, because I was worried about alarming those little ghosts, I left behind the magic item in your second child's house. If I go over now, I am afraid that it will alarm those little ghosts. You had best call over your second child to come. Once I am able to get my magic item, then it will

be easy.” Daoist Priest Ma said rolling his eyes, even such a shameful thing he was able speak while sounding so pompous, was really a talented person.

Zhang Manyin simply couldn’t think that Ma Wulang could be helpless to that extent in front of the little demons, instead he thought that Daoist Priest Ma had made some preparations in second child’s house. He would naturally be very positive towards this request of Daoist Priest Ma. However, on that day Second child had made him lose face, so Zhang Manyin didn’t want to go over personally. Therefore, he made Ma Donghua carry out this task.

The implementation of Ma Donghua’s task was quite rough. While coming over, she was naturally seen by Zhang Jiaohua. Zhang Jiaohua’s nose was quite effective. With one sniff he was able to smell the fragrance of chicken meat coming from Ma Donghua, even more he thought that Ma Donghua had come over to give him chicken meat to eat.

“Grandma, that chicken leg’s is not that tasty, I would rather eat chicken meat in.....” Zhang Jiaohua immediately circled around Grandma only to discover that Ma Donghua’s both hands were empty.

Ma Donghua looked somewhat panickedly at her grandson, “Grandma has come to seek your father for some matter. Grandpa has some important business with your father, child don’t make trouble.”

“Grandma, don’t be biased, did you deliver the chicken meat to Uncle’s house?” Zhang Jiaohua was unhappy.

Liu Qiaoye had long ago heard her Mother-in-law’s conversation with her son. She was deliberately hiding at one side, wanting to hear what was the matter.

“This child, what are you saying? This time the chicken butchered by Grandma wasn’t enough to give you a share. This time, an important guest had come to the house, whose share couldn’t be taken away. Don’t make trouble, Grandma is looking for your parents for some urgent matter.” Ma Donghua was becoming flustered upon being entangled with her Grandson.

Only then Liu Qiaoye walked out, “Mother, you’ve come? I had to go to let out water in the fields. Immediately came back, you come sit down in the room. I’ll get some water for you.”

“No need, no need. I am not thirsty. I have come to my son’s house, not come as a guest. If I were thirsty, wouldn’t I just find the water jar. Jiaohua, you go out and play for a while. Grandma must have some adult talk with your mother.” Ma Donghua wanted Zhang Jiaohua to go away.

If it were normal day, then Ma Donghua definitely wouldn’t have been able to get Zhang Jiaohua to leave. Only, Zhang Jiaohua kept thinking about the chicken meat at Grandma’s house. He was willing to obey Grandma’s instructions, as he ran out of the gate vivaciously, directly going to Grandpa’s house.

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Chapter 6

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Chapter 6 – So you're a child trafficker

Jinhu and all also followed closely behind. Wherever Zhang Jiaohua went, they would follow after.

Zhang Jiaohua after arriving at the main gate of Grandpa's house, heard a somewhat familiar voice resounding inside, "Uncle Manyin, you are really too polite. You yourself should also come eat. I just want to offer a cup of wine in your honour."

At this time, Zhang Jiaohua's entire brain was filled with chicken meat, where would he have the time to carefully listen to the voice to ascertain who it belonged to, perhaps it was that distant relative who didn't visit often. Stamping down with his feet, he ferociously entered into the old house, "Grandpa, has a guest arrived? You! Good, you child trafficker, you were not able to sell me, but still want to think of selling my Grandpa!

With the previous experience, Zhang Jiaohua's eyes immediately looked at the pile of corn cobs in the house. Jinhu et al, were also rubbing their fists and wiping their palms, the hoes, shoulder poles, steelyard weights all stocked in the house.....all began flying.

Ma Wulang seeing the situation to be not right, immediately took to his heels and ran away.

"My mother, ai." A steelyard weight suddenly flew towards Ma Wulang. Ma Wulang dangerously avoided it, the steelyard weight smashed onto the foundation cornerstone in the courtyard, immediately leading to sparks flying out in all directions. Ma Wulang out of fright fled like a scared rat, wishing he could duck into a rathole just like a rat.

This matter had occurred almost instantaneously, Zhang Manyin was also left dumbstruck. By the time he managed to react, Jinhu, et al., and I had already driven away Ma Wulang with not a trace to be seen.

Zhang Manyin patting his two legs and jumped on the spot a few times, the appearance was funny, but Zhang Manyin was naturally anxious. Although he usually wouldn't say anything. Grandpa and Grandma's love for their Grandson wasn't fake, but Zhang Manyin also liked to deal justly towards this Grandson Man (Youngest Grandson) without taking sides. Originally, they had thought that Ma Wulang would be able to come and solve this troublesome business of Grandson Man. However, they didn't think that this matter would be ruined by Grandson Man himself.

"Grandpa, it is lucky that I came early, otherwise you would have ended up being sold in the hands of these swindlers and wouldn't have even known." Zhang Jiaohua chased for a spell of time, but after all his legs were shorter compared to Ma Wulang. How could he catch up. Jinhu et al., apparently needed to maintain a set distance from Zhang Jiaohua, and naturally wouldn't chase after Ma Wulang. Zhang Jiaohua's mind was still thinking of the bowl of chicken meat kept on the dining table in the old house. What a pity. The chicken leg had been nibbled down by Ma Wulang.

"Ai! You this scoundrel! That's enough of you." Zhang Manyin sighed several times.

"Grandpa, you don't need to be afraid, I have driven away the swindler. Next time, he definitely wouldn't dare to come." Zhang Jiaohua was still thinking that Grandpa was sighing at how the old mother hen had been eaten up by that swindler.

Zhang Manyin raised his hand to hit Zhang Jiaohua for a little while, he had raised his hand half way, before he let down his hand. This child is also pitiful. Although is somewhat naughty and mischievous, his heart is actually very good. How would he be willing to hit?

Ma Donghua and Zhang Youping both caught up in a hurry. Upon seeing Zhang Jiaohua sitting in Ma Wulang's place gorging like a reincarnation of a hungry ghost, they were shocked. "Why did Jiaohua come? Where's Daoist Priest Ma?"

"You ask me, I also want to ask you? Why did you let Jiaohua run over!" Zhang Manyin became immediately infuriated.

“How would I know? I let Jiaohua go outside for a bit, so I could talk with Youping about this matter. Who could have imagined that Jiaohua would come running over here? Where is Daoist Priest Ma?” Ma Donghua looked inside and out, but couldn’t find any trace of Daoist Priest Ma.

“Daoist Priest Ma was driven away by this brat.” Zhang Manyin said unhappily.

“Driven away?” Ma Donghua and Zhang Youping felt it to be somewhat inconceivable.

At this time, sound of footsteps resounded in the courtyard.

Zhang Jiaohua’s Uncle and Aunt along with his elder male cousin and female cousin came over.

“Aiya, Jiaohua, you indeed have a happy knack for chancing upon good food. Your elder brother and elder sister come daily, but also unable to eat even one bit. You got a good opportunity, just came once, and had chicken meat to eat. This chicken leg is delicious?” Zhang Jiaohua’s Aunt Hu Xiaoqing spoke somewhat peculiarly. She also thought that Grandpa and Grandma were bit biased towards Zhang Jiaohua.

Zhang Manyin couldn’t help but let out a snort. Ma Donghua immediately drew up Zhang Manyin, so as to not let him flare up.

“Xiaoqing, don’t be so suspicious. Today, this chicken was butchered because there was an important matter. Today, Daoist Priest Ma came, you should also know that second child’s family has been a bit disturbed lately. Originally, we had thought to have Daoist Priest Ma help. In the end, the matter didn’t come to fruition.”

Zhang Manyin sighed, “Ai! Now that you all have come, go get yourself pair of chopsticks and eat together.”

Zhang Jiaohua was disinclined to deal with all of this, he just continued eating with great gusto while minding his own business. Hu Xiaoqing’s two eyes burned with rage seeing this. She pushed the two children by her side, almost making the two stagger, “Your Grandpa has let you eat, quickly get your own chopsticks!”

“I am already full. You all can eat the remaining.” Zhang Jiaohua rapidly grabbed two chicken wings, and quickly ran outside.

Sure enough, soon came the crying voice of female cousin Zhang Runtian could be heard from behind, “I wanted to eat Chicken wings. I want to eat Chicken wing.”

Zhang Jiaohua ran very fast, before Zhang Youping could chase after, Zhang Jiaohua had already run away without a trace. After that, Hu Xiaoqing’s voice could be heard coming from the house, “Cry, just know crying. Who asked you to not move a bit faster? Youping, ah. You should also properly discipline your Jiaohua. He shouldn’t run rampant everywhere like this. Just in case if he had frightened Yuanbao and Runtian then what could have been done?”

“Sister-in-law, how can you say like that? What happened to Jiaohua? He hasn’t become foolish, he hasn’t gone insane, what happened?” Zhang Youping’s protective instinct as a parent flared up.

Zhang Jiaohua’s Elder Uncle Zhang Youlian at this crucial moment, had to take a stand with his team, “Youping, can’t even your elder brother speak to you, ah. Your sister-in-law said this for your own good. Who in the village doesn’t know that Jiaohua is being haunted by the ghosts of those who died prematurely? Even if you want to conceal the truth, you can’t. Normally, I being an Uncle, shouldn’t speak like this. However, if some words I don’t say, then I wouldn’t be doing right by you. With Jiaohua like this, you had best not let him come over to the Old house. Old house bears upon our family’s fengshui. If such unclean things were to come, then what would we do about the spoiled fengshui. It won’t be good for everyone.”

“Ok! In the future, Jiaohua, no, our entire family of three won’t ever stop over at this Old house. Okay! Satisfied now!” Zhang Youping roared out his words, and after having spoken he traced his steps back to walk one step at a time. Several years ago, Zhang Youping husband and wife had chosen to build a new house quite a distance away from the old house, precisely because Zhang Youlian husband and wife were too troublesome. Zhang Youping was worried that living together all day there would be no peace. Now, Zhang Youping felt that at that time he really did have foresight.

Zhang Manyin let out a long and deep sigh, whatever words that he had in mind, he didn't say, he just went to the village pond side to have a smoke.

Ma Donghua sighed incessantly, "Youlian, ah. You shouldn't have said all that. Shouldn't have said."

Zhang Runtian at the moment wasn't crying. Together with Zhang Yuanbao the last bit of chicken meat had been eaten clean. Finally, filling the bowl with rice, swallowed it down completely into their bellies.

The entrance of the village had an old Chinese scholar tree, as the light breeze would blow, the leaves would make rustling sounds. At night, the rustic village was tranquil just like this. Under the moonlight, thin mist had begun to pervade through the air in the village.

"Ah....." Yaba's hysterical cries resounded out in the mountains.

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